

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 HA-05 ACDA-12  
OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10  
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P R 061620Z APR 78  
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AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
USMISSION USNATO  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

UNCLAS LONDON 05375

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: XA, CU, UR, UK  
SUBJECT: OWEN SPEECH ON SOVIET AND CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN  
AFRICA

1. SUMMARY. IN A MAJOR SPEECH ON APRIL 5, FOREIGN  
SECRETARY DAVID OWEN STRONGLY ATTACKED SOVIET AND CUBAN  
MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN THE HORN OF AFRICA. THE  
ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR WALKED OUT OF THE SPEECH, AND THE  
SOVIET AND CUBAN AMBASSADORS HAVE VOICED THEIR DISSATIS-  
FACTION. END SUMMARY.

2. SPEAKING AT AN APRIL 5 BANQUET AT LONDON'S MANSION  
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HOUSE, FOREIGN SECRETARY DAVID OWEN SPOKE OUT AGAINST  
SOVIET AND CUBAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA AND  
WARNED OF ADVERSE EFFECTS ON EAST-WEST RELATIONS SHOULD  
THERE BE ANY SUCH INTERVENTION IN ERITREA, RHODESIA, OR  
NAMIBIA.

3. LAYING RESPONSIBILITY FOR CURRENT PROBLEMS IN THE

HORN AT THE SOVIETS' FEET, OWEN POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS ONLY THE MASSIVE AND PROLONGED INVESTMENT OF SOVIET MILITARY HARDWARE IN SOMALIA WHICH HAD ENABLED THE SOMALIS TO INVADE THE OGADEN IN THE FIRST PLACE. LIKENING CUBAN FORCES IN AFRICA TO "PRIVATE ARMIES IN THE MIDDLE AGES, WHICH MOVED AROUND TILTING THE MILITARY BALANCE INDISCRIMINATELY AT THE WHIM OF THE FEUDAL BARONS," OWEN NOTED THAT THE CUBANS HAD LONG SUPPORTED THE ERITREANS AS "FREEDOM FIGHTERS," BUT HAD NOW TURNED ON THEM AS "PAWNS IN THE IMPERIALISTS' GAME." OWEN ARGUED THAT ERITREA WAS ESSENTIALLY AN INTERNAL ETHIOPIA AFFAIR "WHICH CRIES OUT FOR A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION WITH A MINIMUM OF FURTHER BLOODSHED." OWEN SAID THAT THE UN HAD BEEN HEAVILY INVOLVED IN THE ERITREAN PROBLEM IN 1950 "AND SHOULD RAISE ITS COLLECTIVE VOICE AGAINST ANY ATTEMPT TO IMPOSE A MILITARY SOLUTION NOW."

4. OWEN EXPLICITLY STATED THAT RELATIONS WITH THE USSR WOULD BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED IN THE EVENT OF A MASSIVE, ACTIVE SOVIET-CUBAN MILITARY COMMITMENT IN ERITREA, AND HE ADDED THAT THERE WOULD BE EVEN MORE COMPLICATIONS FOR AFRICA AND EAST-WEST RELATIONS IF THERE WERE ANY ATTEMPT TO USE CUBAN FORCES TO UNDERMINE THE PRESENT TALKS TO BRING PEACE AND DEMOCRACY TO RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA.

5. THE ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR WALKED OUT DURING THE UNCLASSIFIED

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SPEECH AND HAS SUBSEQUENTLY DEFENDED HIS ACTION AS THE ONLY POSSIBLE RESPONSE TO AN "ATTACK AGAINST ETHIOPIA AND ITS REVOLUTION."

6. THE SOVIET AND CUBAN AMBASSADORS STUCK IT OUT TO THE END, BUT BOTH HAVE SINCE TOLD THE PRESS OF THEIR DISSATISFACTION WITH OWEN'S REMARKS AND THEIR INTENTION TO SEEK PROMPT "CLARIFICATION."

7. FULL TEXT OF SPEECH WILL BE POUCHED TO THE DEPARTMENT.

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**TAGS:** PEPR, MILI, XA, CU, UR, UK, (OWEN, DAVID)  
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